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A Socioculturally Microgenetic Scrutiny on the Mediational Role of Teacher/Peer Scaffolding via Dialogic Collaboration in EFL Speaking Development

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ABSTRACT: This study draws primarily on ZPD and concept of mediation (a key element in the sociocultural theory) to analyze the mediational talk in speaking group-works. The authors present an analysis of how EFL learners' speaking skill is socioculturally mediated and developed through teacher-student and student-student collaborative interactions. Situated micro genesis was used as a tool for analyzing the interactions generated between the participants during a dialog making task. The results showed the characteristics of a dialogic communication among the learners as they took part in diverse conversation-making tasks collaboratively. Consequently, the analysis of the communicative discourse of the EFL speaking tasks was indicative of precious insights into the nature of the peer-peer and student-teacher interactions as well as their pivotal contributions to scaffolding the EFL learners' speaking skill in different forms. The findings provide worthwhile evidence substantiating that dialogic exchanges in collaborative tasks are crucial as a mediationally facilitative activity conducive to the improvement of second language speaking ability. Finally, the study proposes some constructive implications for EFL instructors encouraging the integration of collaborative tasks in their speaking classes.

Keywords: Collaboration, dialogic, interaction, microgenetic, scaffolding, sociocultural, speaking

Introduction

The purpose of teaching speaking is to help students master the ability to express thoughts orally (to speak with a prepared and unprepared message, adequately respond to the interlocutor's remarks, initiate communication and take part in it). Speech is not only a mechanism of comprehension but also collaboration, interaction, memory, and discursivity (Zubizarreta, 2017). Thus, students need to be taught to transmit information in a foreign language, to establish contact with the interlocutor, and to influence the interlocutor in accordance with their communicative intention. An important feature in the methodology of teaching speaking is the role mediation by the teacher and peers (Khanahmadi & Sarkhosh, 2018). The aim of this study was to examine the role of mediation in speech generation in an EFL conversation class. While previous studies recognize the importance of collaborative interaction (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Lee, 2008; Su & Zou, 2020; Watanabe & Swain, 2007), their limited focus provides an incomplete picture of learners' interaction in an L2 classroom setting. In this study, however, the objective of studying learners' interaction is to uncover how they use interactional activity as a cognitive tool in a speaking-developing task. By looking at learners' speech as a cognitive activity, a more refined understanding of what really goes on in learners' interaction is achieved. Thus,

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Postulating Vygotsky's (1978) concepts of zone of proximal development as well as scaffolding as the theoretical framework, this study investigated how peer-peer and teacher-student interactions in an EFL conversation class are micro-genetically mediated.

Literature Review

The social and motivational context of productive skills like speaking has been accentuated since the emergence of controversial views as critiques of purely cognitive approaches to the teaching and learning of speaking. Accordingly, the speaking skill is no more approached as an individually accomplished product isolated from its context. This social view of L2 learning and particularly the speaking skill has received extra impetus since the 1990s by an increasing interest in the application of Vygotsky-inspired sociocultural theory (SCT) to second and foreign language research (Ellis, 1997; Ibrahim, Rajeh, Abdulla, Talab, & Mansour, 2021; Lantolf & Genung, 2002; Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997; Oxford, 1997; Razaghi, Bagheri, & Yamini, 2019; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Shabani, 2016; Su & Zou, 2020; van Lier, 1996; Zakarneh, Alsalhi, Talab, Mansour & Mahmoud, 2021). Lantolf (2000) states that the central and distinguishing concept of SCT is that human mind is always and everywhere socially and semiotically mediated within the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD), or "the domain of knowledge or skill where the learner is not yet capable of independent functioning, but can achieve the desired outcome given relevant scaffolded help" (p. 196). The zone of proximal development includes a wide range of emotional, cognitive, and volitional psychological processes (Lantolf & Genung, 2002). However, in modern educational research and practice, this is often interpreted as the distance between what the student can do unaided and what he can do with the support of someone with more knowledge or experience or the more knowledgeable other (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991). The concept was introduced but not fully developed by the psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) during the last three years of his life. Vygotsky argued that the child is involved in a dialogue with more knowledgeable others such as a peer or adult, and gradually, through social interaction and reflection, develops the ability to independently solve problems and perform certain tasks without outside help. Following Vygotsky, some educators believe that the role of education is to give children experiences that are within their zones of proximal development, thereby encouraging and promoting their personalized training such as skills and strategies (Vygotsky et al. 1994).

The concept of scaffolding was originally proposed by Vygotsky (cited in Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997). It refers to the other-regulation process within the ZPD of a novice learner mostly through collaboration by which tutors, parents, teachers, or more skilled peers, prompt or help him or her solve a problem, and is supposedly most helpful for the learning or appropriation of new concepts (Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996; Ford et. al, 2004). Many studies have addressed different scaffolding features of the collaboration with different characteristics. Anton and Di Camilla (1999), Budiartha and Vanessa (2021), Di Camilla & Anton (1997), Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995), Li, Zhang, Li, Huang and Shao (2021), Pata, Sarapuu, and Lehtinen (2005), Razaghi, Bagheri, and Yamini (2019), Sætra (2021), and Yelland and Masters (2005), among many others, have studied the mediating nature of

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collaborative dialogue in fulfilling different kinds of tasks. For instance, Anton and Di Camilla (1999) examined the use of L1 as a powerful tool of semiotic mediation in providing scaffolded help in the collaborative activities. Their study highlighted the importance of repetition, private speech, and the first language (L1) in the students' discourse. De Guerrero & Villamil (2000) demonstrated how two students learn from each other during interaction in a peer-review activity. Grounded in the sociocultural theory of mind, there is a belief that language development is dependent upon the mediation and socialization into the community of language learning practice. Thus, many practitioners have adopted group work in the immediate context of the classroom. Brooks and Donato (1994), DiCamilla and Anton (1997), Storch (2002) and Swain and Lapkin (1998) allude to the complexity of context and the mediation it offers in language learning and the necessity for a more comprehensive approach to studying context and its mediational effect on learning.

Dialogical Speech

Oral speech can be monologic and dialogical. Dialog is a form of speech in which there is a direct exchange of statements between two or more persons (Bunt, 2011). In contrast, a monologue is addressed to one or a group of listeners, sometimes to oneself, and is characterized by expansion, the presence of common constructions, and their grammatical form (Kushnir & Mykhalchuk, 2021). Natural everyday communication is mainly dialogical or polylogical. The unit of dialogue is dialogical exchange -a pair of moves belonging to different interlocutors and forming an organic whole in terms of content and structure (Sunah, 2017). A dialogic exchange is the initial unit of teaching dialogic speech and is a combination of moves characterized by structural, intonational and semantic completeness (Sunah, 2017). In each dialogical exchange, the types of utterances are combined in different ways (message, question, urge, exclamation). It is generally accepted that dialogical speech causes more difficulties in the learning process than monologue (Tajeddin & Alizadeh, 2015). These difficulties are due to the specific characteristics of the dialogue. Weigand (2017) considers reactivity and situationality to be the main characteristics of the dialogue. The reactivity of the dialogue refers to the fact that the response of the dialogue partner is unpredictable or may be absent. In such a situation, it is necessary to make changes to the previously outlined logic of the conversation. If students do not have the necessary social skills of dialogical communication in certain situations, then the teacher's task is to form them. In the process of teaching dialogical speech, students must be taught to get in touch with people, politely answer questions, show interest in what the interlocutor says, maintain a conversation with the help of simple response cues, adequately use facial expressions, gestures, intonation and other paralinguistic means (Tajeddin & Alizadeh, 2015). Another feature of dialogical speech - situationality - refers to the fact that dialogical speech exists only in a situation that determines the motive of speaking (Bakhtin, 1986). The situation covers both objective factors of reality and its subjective interpretation, which cannot be an accurate reflection of reality, since understanding the conditions of communication depends on the personal experience and personal ideas of the communicants, on their state at the time of speech interaction. Donato and Lantolf (1990) also

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distinguish between an educational situation and understand it as a set of conditions that encourage the expression of thoughts and the use of a certain linguistic material. The constant change of speaker and listener is also a distinctive feature of dialogical speech (Ladousse, 2004). Other important features of the dialogue are ellipticity - reduction of language means due to the presence of a single situation; the use of non-verbal elements, pauses, interruption, restructuring of phrases, emotionality, expressiveness, and the use of conversational formulas (Davidson, 1993).

Teaching Dialogical Speech

There are two ways of teaching/practicing dialogues through role play: scripted dialogues and constructed dialogues (Mandala, 2017). The first method involves acquaintance with individual remarks that make up the dialogue, with the subsequent assimilation of the content of the dialogue as a whole. This method implies the presence of several stages: presentation (reading the dialogue by the teacher in its entirety and by cues, students repeating the cues after the teacher), explanation (analysis of cues, new words, grammatical structures), consolidation (reading the dialogue by students by roles, performing exercises), development (students composing their own dialogue, speech exercises) (Coulthard et. al. 2017). The second method involves constructing the content of the dialogue by the learners themselves as a coherent text with the subsequent assimilation of individual remarks. Both methods have both advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage of the scripted dialogue method is the predominance of language exercises, the non-creative nature of the activity. The stages of work in this case are as follows: presentation (perception of the dialogue by students by ear with an attitude towards global understanding), consolidation (reading the dialogue by roles, doing exercises, memorizing), and development (playing dialogue by roles, composing your dialogue based on it). The downside of the constructed dialogues is the lengthy process that it takes to construct one. Nevertheless, both methods can complement each other, their reasonable combination in a foreign language lesson can optimize the process of teaching dialogical speech (Brown, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

Situated microgenesis originates from psychological constructivism (Saada-Robert, 2017) and incorporates contributions from Vygotskian sociocultural psychology and from Brousseau's studies on didactic situations. The concern of microgenesis is to study the ways in which a task is solved at a cognitive level; this implies the transfer of a model that studies development as defined states to another that prioritizes the processes of change that occur in a particular context. As part of psychological constructivism, it takes up Piaget's postulates, but with an important emphasis on the subject and the functional aspects of knowledge. That is, instead of describing levels of knowledge construction (structural approach), this approach proposes to study the relevance of said knowledge for the resolution of specific tasks (functional approach). There is a concern to study the ways in which a task is solved at a cognitive level. This implies the transfer of a model that studies development as defined states to another that prioritizes the processes of change that occur in a particular context

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(Saada-Robert, 2017). The situated nature of microgenesis gives crucial importance to the context where the subjects carry out the task. Understanding the specific conditions where interactions take place allows us to know the reciprocal adjustment that occurs between the participants to achieve learning. According to Saada-Robert and Balslev (2006), there are four aspects that should not be lost sight of when analyzing this adjustment.

a) the diversity of actions produced by learners;
b) the linkages between said actions to achieve particular objectives;
c) the effects of those actions on teachers'/peers' intervention;
d) the reciprocal effects of teachers'/peers' interventions on learning.

Scaffolding behaviors occur when learners try to cooperate with each other to solve grammatical and lexical problems. On numerous occasions, learners are able to achieve proper solutions to their language-related problems and co-construct new language knowledge by pooling their individual resources. Lidz (1991) developed Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale (MLERS) to analyze mediated instruction as a representative of scaffolding based on Vygotsky's concept of ZPD. The components of MLE describe the behavior of the mediator. Mediation must occur within a reciprocal relationship, namely unresponsiveness, responding incorrectly, requesting for verification, requesting for more help, solution of the problem, and rejecting the mediator's assistance. The mediation must answer the processing demands of the selected tasks in relation to a) meaning, b) transcendence, c) task regulation, and d) change on a number of planes including attention, perception, memory, social/emotional cognition, language meaning, reasoning, and metacognition. What follows is a partial description of the model. Meaning mediation must solve the problem of perceptual characteristics of tasks in a way that attracts students' attention, for example, by introducing ways to highlight important content that needs attention, the use of contrast and novelty, and the gestures and sounds of operations. It must help the learner to note relevant distinctive features and increase the salience of these features for the learner by facilitating the learner's ability to relate precepts to previous experiences. It must help students incorporate material to be remembered in meaningful contexts by embedding units, highlighting outstanding characteristics that can increase retention, and trying to make emotional connections.

Transcendental mediation must help students understand the importance of attention, by formulating strategies to promote contextual attention, and making causal assumptions about the source of attention difficulties. It must communicate the importance of precision and detail by promoting students' ability to compare, process and proceed. It must facilitate movement between forms by helping students connect past and future experiences. It must promote perceptual strategies and organization. It must promote the use of memory strategies by encouraging participation/active thinking, keeping presentations within memory capacity, and providing sufficient repetition. Task regulation mediation must manipulate the duration of the task, the number of elements, the pace, the

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level of difficulty, and the use of presentation strategies. It must promote perceptual strategies and organization. It must promote the use of memory strategies by encouraging participation/active thinking, keeping presentations within memory capacity, and providing sufficient repetition. Change mediation must communicate to students a significant improvement in student attention regulation by helping students become more aware of loss of attention and ways to refocus attention. It must provide feedback, highlighting how the students noticed the more important details of the task.

Research Rationale and Question

Analytically, the exploration of how learners make use of language as a mediational tool during collaborative activity is of paramount importance (DiCamilla & Anton 1997; Swain & Lapkin 2000). The current study deals with the nature of speaking process in all phases of this model. Moreover, it does not try to elicit only one specific scaffolding behavior but it analyzes all the possible scaffolding strategies employed by the speakers in communicative processes. This type of microgenetic analysis of the speaking process is crucial in understanding how psychological processes are formed. Researchers most commonly have attended to monitoring or feedback stage. One of the drawbacks of peer talk or feedback, however, is that the focus is often on the product of speaking rather than the process of speaking. In L2 contexts in particular, a number of studies (e.g., Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996) have shown that when students are asked to peer-interact, they tend to focus on errors at the sentence and word level. Thus, the process of speaking remains a private act, where speakers are left to their own devices when making important decisions about their speech (Hirvela, 1999). Through this type of analysis, it is possible to grasp "the process in flight", as Vygotsky (1978, p. 68) nicely puts it. The crucial issue in the study of collaborative activity is to understand how it is that the social plane provides a platform for learners to capitalize on the consciousness/awareness stage and work further towards the necessary monitoring and modification in order to achieve internalization stage. Thus the following question was investigated in this study.

- How are peer-peer and teacher-student interactions in an EFL conversation class micro-genetically mediated?

Method

Design

The study benefits from a qualitative case study to account for the ZPD of the participants' transcribed social interactions and to delve into the nature of peer-peer and student-teacher interaction. The aim of the case study is to provide qualitative information through a specific study of a given case (Merriam, 1988). Microgenetic analysis, which stems from the work of Lidz (1999), was used as a method to assess intellectual potential and overcome cognitive deficits of learners. The role of the instructor as a mediator of student learning is unique to this approach. The basic premise of this approach is that

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individuals can modify and enhance their learning by working with qualified teachers/peers who mediate. This method emphasizes the configuration and rich description of data.

Participants

The participants in the study conveniently sampled included 25 native Persian-speaking EFL undergraduate students (male and female) in the age range of 20 - 25 years. They were all sophomores taking a conversation course taught by the researcher for their BA program in an EFL conversation class at University of Hormozgan.

Instruments

Role play was used to collect data. Role play is especially sensitive to the sphere of human activity, labor and relations between people (Rojas & Villafuerte, 2018). Consequently, the content of any role-playing is the relationship between people, the aim of which is communication. The advantage of role play over other types of speaking tasks such as free discussions is that it considers speech activity in a social context, i.e. the topic of the conversation, the relationship between communication partners, the place and time of the action, preliminary knowledge of the interlocutor are taken into account. This study employed constructed dialogues approach to collect data. Thus, the data was collected in the course of one semester which was up to sixteen sessions.

Research Procedure

To conduct class discussions, all students were divided into small subgroups that discussed certain questions included in the topic of the lesson. The major topic was broken down into separate tasks. The tangible results of discussion were: making a list of interesting thoughts, speaking by one or two member's subgroups with reports, preparation of methodological developments or instructions, and drawing up an action plan. The subgroups were then tasked with preparing a role play based on their discussions. Role play belongs to the category of low input, high output language teaching technologies - after a short introduction by the teacher, students were immersed in the activity. The class met weekly for a period of two hours. Throughout the semester the participants gave six conversation-making tasks in groups. The topics of the conversations were as follows: financial and social problems, advantages of studying abroad, job satisfaction, vacation during school year, students' role in choosing university courses, and parents' divorce and children's status. The students' oral interactions while preparing their conversations were recorded for later analysis. The aim was to elicit information on the way learners benefited from scaffolding behaviors which collaborative speaking might have offered them. The students' oral practices in class were all in groups. Each group comprised students of four descending levels of A, B, C, and D in terms of general English proficiency. The researcher analyzed the transcriptions of the audio-recorded discourse which included the scaffolding strategies observed in the teacher and peers' conversations.

Data Analysis

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The analysis was carried out by identifying implicit and explicit cues within the data. Content analysis was used to assess specific movements made in collaboration with mediation and learners. Thus, the audio-recorded sessions were analyzed through thematic analysis. Careful study of dialogues showed specific mediated behaviors on the part of mediators and learners. Two colleague helped the researcher to code the transcripts and interpret the results. Due to shortage of space only two exemplars are reported here.

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Results

The data presented here comprises three sections of random selection extracted from a larger collection of group-conversation discourses recorded during a semester. Each section was subjected to microgenetic analysis, that is, interactions were scrutinized in order to observe a) moment-to-moment changes in behavior that might signal communicative skills through mediated assistance, and b) scaffolding mechanisms employed by the students in helping each other go through the conversation-making process. Previously established categories and features of assistance in the ZPD and those in Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994) and Lidz (1991) were also utilized.

Exemplar 1

1. A: Come on! Tell me the first idea (L1)... describing divorce issues...
2. B: Can you explain more?
3. A: I can give a description first… then I ask you a question...
4. C: I will answer your question. What's the question?(L1)
5. A: I can ask, "What factors do you think cause divorce?"
6. B: Yes, that's ok.
7. A: or you can ask if it has negative impacts on our lives... or we can say (L1)…
8. C: Uhum… then I should say something challenging…
9. A: And What's that?
10. C: (laughing) I don't know; you can suggest…
11. B: I think we should say it at the beginning...
12. A: Ok we don't have time...let me list some ideas…
13. C: First we should mention the topic and describe…
14. A: Ok, suppose we did it (L1)... now we should state a challenging view...
15. B: For example, some people think that divorce... (speaking and taking notes)
16. C: Or divorcing...
17. A: Or getting divorce (repeated several times) ...
18. B: May have... may have... may have affect someone's...
19. A: No, affect is not a good word... benefit?
20. C: Divorce never has any benefits...

21. B: Getting divorce may... do we want to say divorce is good or not?
22. A: (Laughing) We want to say not to divorce but as an opposing view you should say divorce is good... (this point is negotiated for a few seconds) (L1)
23. T (everyone's quiet... teacher is talking about the benefit of pausing at the beginning of each sentence; quality-related issues)

The first thing noticed was the contingent use of L1 by the members of the group throughout the collaboration. L1 was a very important semiotic mediation to regulate the task especially among the L2 learners with the same L1. L1, actually, played a strategic psychological role both in scaffolding and establishing intersubjectivity to perform the task, achieve the goals and thus realize the level of the potential development (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Anton & Dicamilla, 1998). In line with Villamill & DeGuerrero's (1996) findings, regarding the use of L1, in Exemplar 1, it was evident that the subjects made use of L1 in order to explore and expand the content, guide their actions through the task, and maintain the dialogue. L1 was a mediating device in the construction of collective scaffolding (Donato, 1994). At the very beginning (1A), the participant by using the word *come on* wanted to recruit the interest in the task and direct the others' attention toward the goal. The word *come on* also entailed an initiation of an intersubjectivity among members. Intersubjectivity is defined as being able to go beyond one's own perception and include another's way of thinking as the basis for the construction of intersubjectivity (Grossen, 2010). The utterance also implies intentionality by which the members become involved in the task and their attention is engaged. In this respect, 2B, 9A, and 21B were all requests for clarification that, according to Villamil and De Guerrero (1996), is one of the facilitative behaviors in providing peer support during collaboration. Throughout the exemplar, the learners overtly addressed the problem of accessing the linguistic items needed to express their ideas and as in 16C, 20C, 21B, and 22A the assertions were mediated by some clarifications or modifications, sometimes through the limited use of L1. In 15B, in order to solve the problem of finding the correct form of the verb *divorce*, the partners resort to the repetition in which all the members are engaged (16C & 17A). Peers, throughout their collaboration, sometimes, gave minilessons on form or content and the others accept and act accordingly (as in 3A & 13C). Mini-lessons are short, focused lessons that teach specific aspects when the need arises (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). The delivery of mini-lessons is a kind of scaffolding mechanism for students to disclose their expertise and provide knowledge of the language to each other, where everyone is working equally on a common task. In 22A again the task was regulated by L1, as a very powerful meaning mediation. Occasional laughing (10C) or humor is an effective social move to involve social/emotional cognition and attain further affective involvement in the activity. Interestingly, task regulation was done by all the members throughout the interaction and as the interaction progressed a symmetrical relationship between the peers was established with all showing signs of self- and other-regulation at different times.

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Exemplar 2

24. A: … the quality of education should be criticized …

25. B: That's ok!

26. A: The next idea? … (taking notes of ideas)

27. B: The teachers do not have a good commitment …

28. A: Do you think so? (laughing) … (some private speech showed that 27B was added to the list)

29. B: But their behaviors nowadays are more friendly…

30. C: And they don't follow any principles of teaching…

31. A: What do you mean by principles?

32. C: I mean it is more a take-it-easy task now... get it?

33. A: Aha, so, you mean teaching is less serious nowadays… (taking notes of ideas)

34. B: Aha, so, I will say that, teachers should be more responsible …

35. B: But I don't understand what you mean by less serious?

36. A: I want to list them just to see what we have later on then we will put them in order in the conversation…

37. B: Ok. For example, we can say that because of the large number of students… right?

38. C: Yes... what else…

39. A: We can also say that teachers should be more independent…

40. C: Do you think independence makes them more responsible?

41. A: Yes, they don't rely on their family and… they try to be more serious and interested in their job...

42. C: No need to take notes of that part... we had it before...

43. A: No problem... it's just for note-taking... we will put them in order later on to make a conversation…

44. B: There are varieties of teachers...

45. A: No, it's not a correct sentence... teachers have different varieties or styles of teaching…

46: C: they are different variety of teachers…

47. B: we can't say "different variety..."

48. C: many variations... (negotiation over the meaning goes on…) (teacher comes and takes a look at their notes and they say that it's a brainstorm)

49. A: there are more applications for teaching that many of them…

50. B: we should use apply

51. A: no... not apply...

52. B: yes, why not, apply for teaching…

53. C: apply for teaching? No, it can be applicants maybe… or apply for a teaching job...

54. T: (negotiation goes on over using a proper word for a few minutes and teacher again intervenes and everything is settled)

In Exemplar 2, as in the previous one, various forms of "mediation of meaning" can be observed; the aim of these moves is to highlight for the members of the group what is important, what should be said, what is proper to say, and so on. These are fulfilled through marking critical features (Wood *et al*., 1976), that is, highlighting certain relevant features and pointing out discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution (41A, 46C, 47B, 48C, and 50B). This is sometimes done through correction on the part of the peer who wants to mediate their task at hand. Through demonstration (Wood *et al*., 1976), the learner models an idealized form of the act to be performed by completing the act or by explicating the learner's partial solution (33A, 34B, 48C, & 53C). In 25B, *that's ok* can be an explicit example of praise and encouragement (Lidz, 1991) which is a significant feature of the groups that are marked by high degrees of intersubjectivity. One feature of this kind of group can be pinpointed in the students' tuning into the task and making corrections very quickly, as if working in an automatic collaboration mode. This feature can be observed in this group. In other words, as the interaction proceeds, a symmetrical relationship between the peers is established with both showing signs of self- and other-regulation at different times. Verbal and non-verbal encouragement keeps the individuals and, as a whole, the groups' self-esteem high. Minimizing the difficulties the task entails for the members can also be interpreted as praise and encouragement. By seeking each other's approval as in 37B, the members are displaying affective involvement in their collaboration. Affective involvement through approval, encouragement, and great intersubjectivity also leads to frustration control (Wood *et al*., 1976), which reduces stress and frustration during problem-solving. Another sign of affective involvement can be seen in 28A, which is marked by members' laughing together. The query *right*? in 37B also demonstrates the use of 'communicative ratchet' (Ratner & Bruner, 1978) by the peer in order to make sure that the others do not fall back and the interaction keeps going. Sometimes 'communicative ratchet' entails mediator's re-explanation and reclarification to avoid learners' falling back. The strategy is utilized when the peer does not seem to be authoritative. It is worth mentioning that sometimes the tone and persuasive skills of an authoritative peer who is less knowledgeable may cause the others to regress in their thinking, particularly if their level of confidence is low. However, according to Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995), regression is a normal feature of growth in L2 learning and should be expected to manifest itself in microgenetic development. On the whole, there is no doubt that in collaborative activities certain students' attitudes and behaviors are more facilitative than others in providing support. Negotiation of the members over the word "application" from 50B to 53C indicates that collective scaffolding collapses and the talk is not settled. At the moment, a dialogic assistance (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994) is offered by the teacher who was around observing the groups. This kind of help enjoys the feature of contingency as one aspect of effective scaffolding proposed by Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994).

Exemplar 3

55. A: … Job satisfaction should be defined.

56. B: Fair enough!

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57. A: What else? … (taking notes of ideas)
58. B: How important is salary?
59. A: Not at all? (laughing) …
60. B: I think there is a minimum salary for happiness …
61. C: But I think happiness is not the same as satisfaction…
62. A: What do you mean by that?
63. C: I agree. Sometimes I am satisfied but not happy?
64. A: Aha, you mean happiness is not tangible, but satisfaction is… (taking notes of ideas)
65. B: Ok.…Again …We need a definition for job satisfaction…Right?
66. B: And the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness?
67. A: So, we have two items in our list so far.
68. B: Ok. We can say job satisfaction depends on so and so.
69. C: Like what?
70. A: Like age, working environment, fairness…
71. C: I think we should explain why some workers are apathetic.
72. A: Yes, they they're just there.
73. C: We may compare an apathetic employee and an enthusiastic one.
74. A: Good idea. I jot it down.
75. B: And motivation!
76. A: Aha. You think that lack of motivation is one the causes of apathy.
77: C: I agree. Maybe we should focus on causes instead of comparing people.
78. A: I think focusing on causes is more important.
79. B: I am confused…Maybe we are going beyond job satisfaction (teacher comes and takes a look at their notes and they say that it's a brainstorm)
80. A: So, we are in square one…
81. B: Let's talk about tangible issues like salary, age, working environment……

This exemplar manifests a retour (a mid-way correction) during the discussion on job satisfaction in response to a detour from a more general discussion, when the participants turn to issues that are not really the focus of discussion. In two places, namely 71.C and 73.C, the speaker seems to make a détour (a wrong turn) from the main course discussion by focusing on the issue of happiness and its causes rather than job satisfaction. Detour-spotting is an essential skill for an informed discussion. The notion détour has been introduced in illocutionary logic by Vanderveken (2001). According to Schein (1993), we are constantly tempted to detour off course. A detour turns away from the initial exchange, and leaves the conversation unresolved or leads to another detour. Thus, conversation involves constant retour in face of such instances of détour. In addition, it imposes the role of *neuter* to the interlocutors. If one's goal is to optimize the agreement between what one believes and what one's interlocutors says, one must employ processes of detour-spotting. The

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assertions “I am confused” and “let’s talk about” in 79.B and 81.B are clear cases of detour-spotting. Detour is constructive only when two interlocutors abandon their goals for a third one. A constructive strategy, according to Vanderveken (2001), is a non-inferential dialogic strategy which is to be distinguished from both reactive and directive strategies. A reactive strategy consists of delegating the initiative to one’s interlocutor by making him/her shoulder his/her goal, or by adopting his/her goal. In contrast, a directive strategy consists in keeping the initiative to lead the dialogue.

Exemplar 4

82. A: …How are social problems best solved?
83. B: No…. First we should discuss types of social problems.
84. A: Families need more income…
85. B: What are common social problems?
86. A: Poverty and homelessness… (taking notes of ideas).
87. B: Mental health. …
88. C: Alcohol usage…
89. A: Youth alcohol usage.
90. C: Is mental health a social problem?
91. A: I don’t think so… (taking notes of ideas)
92. B: Ye…. Why not? I read somewhere that anxiety a social issue, even suicide!!
93. A: What is the root cause of suicide?
94. A: So, social problem is something that affects a large group of people, whatever the cause.
95. B: I think it is good start.
96. C: Then what?
97. A: We should begin by examples and ask for solutions.
98. C: and causes…
99. A: Causes are difficult to explain.
100. C: What can be done about social problems.
101. A: We need more examples, then.
102. B: Crimes, Drug abuse!
103. A: Single parents.
104: C: Violence against kids and women.
105. B: I think there are too many social problems. We should focus on two or three of them.
106. A: Yes, we have only a few minutes for discussions (teacher comes and takes a look at their notes and they say that it's a brainstorm)
107. A: So, Crimes, drug abuse and…
108. B: Single parents…

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This discussion was characterized by the *intention* of the participants to achieve mutually acceptable solutions. A series of statements were made by participants in turn. Each statement had to relate to the same subject or topic to give the discussion the necessary cohesion. Both verbal and non-verbal means (e.g. rising intonation) were used by the participants to pinpoint the contradictions between the abstract nature of the subject (social problems) and their real manifestations (e.g. homelessness, unemployment). All the participants had the opportunity to actively listen, develop a common opinion, and resolve any disagreements. To solve disagreements among the participants, doubts were expressed and an argument followed (e.g. 87. B, 90. C, 91. C, 94. A). Initially, a participant (87. B) mentioned mental health as a social problem. Another participant (90.C and 91.C) expressed doubt. A third participant (94. A) rounded up this part of the discussion by presenting an argument. It seems that at times the participants felt that they had lost the ability to simply and ingeniously express the events of the physical world (e.g. 90. C and 92. B). They were unsure about the language they adopted. That is why everything was so difficult and confusing to them. To resolve this, the participants preferred straight forward examples to general concepts or definitions (e.g. 107.A and 108. B). According to Matusov (1996), the micro-fabrics of dispute and close collaboration are based on both agreements and disagreements. This notion of inter-subjectivity incorporates the dynamics of both agreement and disagreement. Matusov (1996) states that disagreements are not nuisances or obstacles while focusing on integrative activities at the micro-level. In his view, inter-subjectivity is not a state of symmetry among individuals, nor is it reducible to individual subjectivity (i.e., prolepsis). Rather, inter-subjectivity is "having in common" versus as coordination. In effect, this means that the participants should hang out in uncertainty rather than rushing to find a quick solution. A good dialogue requires equal contributions from all parties, which ultimately leads to understanding.

Exemplar 5

109. A: Students need a break, too.

110. B: Families can spend time together.

111. A: Kids may have time off from school, but parents often don't.

112. B: Do kids get enough breaks?

113. A: Not taking a holiday can upset your physical and mental health.

114. B: Children are more active during school holidays.

115. C: So far, so good…But any disadvantages?

116. A: Summer vacation is no longer necessary. We must evenly distribute vacations throughout the year.

117. C: There might be a learning loss. (taking notes of ideas)

118. A: I don't think so…

119. B: Why not?

120. A: Learning loss is due to suppressing learning not vacations.

121. B: Go on!

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122. A: It is just like turning off your mind.
123. C: Good metaphor!
124. A: What else?
125. C: It is difficult to argue against summer schooldays. Everyone likes it.
126. A: Sure…. But we don't have to argue for or against it. We talk about what it means to kids and why they like it.
127. C: Or what it meant in the past and what it means at present.
128. A: Alright, then.
129. B: But we are not kids anymore!!
130. A: We used to be kids.
131: C: Well…I liked the trips we had during the summer and games we played.
132. B: I have lots of cousins and we met during the summer.
133. A: Me too. (teacher comes and takes a look at their notes and they say that it's a brainstorm)
134. A: So, I think we have enough stuff.
135. B: Yes. We do.

During that discussion, there were some key checkpoints and dead-ends that the participants dealt with. First, the participants had to narrow down the topic of the conversation (i.e., school vacation) to something reasonable and manageable (e.g., 126. A). Second, they had to provide a structure to their thoughts and ideas (e.g., 115.C and 126.A). Notice that the participants were undecided about whether to talk about merits and demerits or to focus of the personal meaning of summer vacations to kids. In other words, they only gradually got to know what type of argument they were supposed to produce. Thus, clarification requests were observed throughout the dialog (e.g., 121.B and 123.C). The participants seemed to know when to stop, showing their knowledge of turn taking rules (134.A and 135.B). In short, the learning of 'argument structure' played a determining role in the students' production, constituting the support necessary of interactions. The guided demand for the identification of argument type helped to define a greater responsibility and care in the generation of messages, for both the students and the tutor. This situation required a greater effort on the part of the student and greater scaffolding by the tutor throughout the process of teaching learning. There are theories of argumentation that offer the description, conceptualization and systematization of reasoning, as well as models and criteria related to the identification, construction, analysis and evaluation of arguments. An example of this is the argumentation theory of Toulmin (2003). Toulmin (2003) allows identifying which elements make up the argument, defined as a complex structure of statements that justify and guarantee a conclusion. Thus, argumentation implies considering the role of reasoning that requires the development of skills to relate data to conclusions, evaluate theoretical statements against empirical data or from other sources, make assertions based on new data, and use models and concepts (Toulmin, 2003). In this exemplar, the task of learning 'argument structure' was carried out through scaffolding with no explicit instruction.

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Discussion

Change is a central issue in learning. However, it is not easy to observe the change itself, know its causes and its mechanisms. The microgenetic approach offers the means to visibly update or externalize the development of internal representations and the mechanisms that build them (Lidz, 1991), because all human activity, such as thinking, perceiving, etc., is an unfolding process, or microgenesis, which can occur in seconds, hours or days. The aim of microgenesis is to reconstruct the evolutionary process of higher capacities that have already been automated or fossilized (Lim et. al, 2017). This microgenetic study investigated the dynamics of scaffolding in teacher/peer mediation in an EFL oral proficiency class within the ZPD, encompassing all vital content - feeling, experience, work, and thought. The results demonstrated how meditative movements, including the presence of a mediator, memorization, thought-provoking questions, and translation, can help students overcome fear, cognitive issues and semantic and structural deficiencies. At first the participants were a bit reluctant, maybe due to some personal reasons, to take or accept the role of mediators, but the presence of supportive mediation encouraged them to find solutions, discover and complete the task at hand. By giving them time to reflect, the mediators contributed to the intensification of the process of dialogical speech, helping them to master the language as a means of communication.

The socio-psychological impact of the dialogues consisted in overcoming the fear of communication in a foreign language and the formation of a culture of communication. The participants learned better through experience and hands-on interaction versus being expected to learn by formal instruction with the teacher posturing as knowing more than the learner. The mediating cycle involved both teacher and the peers. The participants learn from one another continuously as they generated dialogues. Exemplar one manifested the problem of inter-subjectivity in the process of dialogic learning. The problem of intersubjectivity arises as an attempt to answer the question of how the individual learner reaches the experience of another i.e. teacher or peer and through this - to the universal horizon of experience. In other words, intersubjectivity refers to the ability of a person in the process of communication to establish a relationship between several points of views - his own and someone else's, i.e., take into account, compare, contrast, and reconcile different points of view on objects and events. Ideas about the existence of "I" in relation to others forms the basis of the sociocognitive concept of ‘I’, which is considered as the most important property of cognition of the world and communication.

A broad understanding of this phenomenon puts ‘I’ on the same level with communication in general, and allows researchers to consider this phenomenon as the most important factor in linguistic evolution (Lim et. al, 2017). Analysis of the ways of explicit manifestation of intersubjectivity in language is an important task of microgenetic analysis. Exemplar one also manifested the importance of intentionality in the mediation process. The concept of intention in the framework of linguistic theory is included in the field of speech act theory. It is also very important in everyday life. In the theories of speech communication, the intention of the utterance is often considered as the starting point of the utterance. Thus, a deliberate, intentional or premeditated utterance is one whose

interpretation fits into the strategic plan that existed in the speaker even before the utterance was made, thus reducing the possibility of miscommunication. One can speak of intentionality in speech when there is a fulfillment of a pre-planned act: the intention to offend, to make it known, to make a compliment, to mention a scientific term, to explain incomprehensible places, to make amends, to attract attention, etc. Unintentionality is something that does not fit into the framework of the plan. So, to make a reservation, to let it slip, to blabber, to make a mistake - with a direct interpretation of the corresponding speech actions, at "face value" - means to commit unintentional actions.

Nassaji, and Swain (2000) examined whether random versus negotiated helped the learning of English articles. They found that negotiated, intentional help was much more effective. Native language was seen to play a major role in both exemplars. In modern linguodidactic literature, the role of the native language as a scaffolding tool in the process of teaching a foreign language has been controversial. Recently, methods aimed at refusing to participate in the native language in the learning process have become popular in teaching foreign languages. However, in a number of cases, both theorists and practicing teachers admit that the use of the native language at the right time and in the right way often ends successfully. It is difficult to overestimate the role of the native language in the learning process at the initial stage of teaching EFL. Refusal to translate and rely on the native language at this stage of learning does not contribute to the successful mastery of the language at the cognitive level. Individual differences allowed the students and the teacher converge in a space to create a learning moment. That is why this study recruited individual learners from four differentiated levels called A, B, C, and D. The inclusion of participants at different stages of ZPD in the evaluation process contributed to transformative process by allowing the students to determine the suitability of their performance (Lidz, 1991). The systemic nature of the strategy was guaranteed by the influence of the stages that identify it, which at the same time they directed the learner's internal organization. Its purpose was to assess the learner not only from the professional level, but also as a human being with the potential to *transcend* through the social transformations that it generates from its performance, which gives the strategy an axiological character. This characritics highlighted the importance of *transcendence* as envisaged by Lidz (1991).

Conclusion and Implications

In conclusion, this study aimed to open the discussion on the challenges involved in teaching oral speech. There is no doubt that oral speech is not learned alone, it requires the close accompaniment of the teacher at different times in the process of generation of speech. For this, teachers need to have didactic, linguistic and psychological tools that allow them to identify the difficulties of speaking, generate a reliable diagnosis and build forms of intervention tailored to their needs. The most important practical implication of the study is rooted in the fact that knowledge acquisition requires the active participation of teachers and students in a communicative and dialogical process. From a dialogical perspective, it is necessary to trust in the ability of human agency to transcend limitations and to expand opportunities to transform on a personal level, as they carry out the process of moving

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from an individual act of construction of meanings in the subjective interaction with the discourse to an *inter-subjective* interaction of collective construction between pairs. Successful learning should be implemented, based on dialogical learning, to improve learning outcomes and reduce inequalities in performance.

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